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Statement of Senator Mansfield

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May 14, 1964

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

I was not present in the Chamber on yesterday when the distinguished Senator from Delaware (Mr. Williams) offered his resolution. But I was present when he offered a resolution on the same subject several months ago. He discussed that resolution with the Leadership on both sides and he received the support of the Leadership on both sides and the unanimous approval of the Senate for his resolution. There was agreement that the terms of that resolution were as broad as necessary to permit the Rules Committee to inquire into any and all Senate practices and persons and to recommend to the Senate any changes in existing law, rules or whatever which might be necessary to safeguard the integrity of this body. I am not a lawyer but insofar as I am concerned,--and I am speaking as Majority Leader of this body and on my own responsibility--that is still my understanding of the first Williams resolution and, insofar as the Chairman of the Rules Committee is concerned, as he made clear on yesterday, it is his understanding that Senators can be heard under the existing resolution if there are specific charges or allegations.

It disturbs me, therefore, that the Senator from Delaware now feels impelled to offer this elaboration. In the proffered resolution he specifies illegal matters, immoral matters, improper activities, campaign matters or, as he is quoted as saying, "everything but the kitchen sink." I am disturbed, further, by the fact that this resolution is offered just at the time that the duly constituted and authorized Committee of the Senate is on the verge of making its report to the Senate pursuant to the first resolution of the Senator from Delaware.

I know the Senator well enough to know that he would not wish to do an injustice to any member of the Senate. Yet, with all due respect,

that is clearly the effect of this resolution. At the very least it casts doubt in advance on the integrity or adequacy of the report of the Committee on Rules even before it is filed.

The distinguished and decent Chairman of that Committee (Mr. Jordan) and the able members of that Committee need no defense from me or anyone. But I want to say that I will not permit any challenge, however inadvertent, to their integrity to go unanswered. And whatever its intent that would be precisely the effect of the adoption of this second resolution.

The first resolution under which the Committee has operated is broad enough to permit any necessary inquiry into the affairs of anyone in the Senate now or in the past. It is broad enough to permit necessary inquiry into all associated with the Senate now and in the past. It is broad enough to permit the Committee to develop whatever facts may be necessary in order to recommend to the Senate, improvements in law, rules, or procedures which safeguard the Senate's integrity. But it is not broad enough to permit any Senator to impugn the character of any or all of his colleagues on the basis of vague suspicions. It is not broad enough to permit any Senator to challenge the integrity of the 99 others on the basis of the rumors and innuendos which are one of the biggest businesses of this city, without accepting the responsibility for his challenge.

So I say to the Senator from Delaware, to the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. Case), to the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Scott) , name your Senator, name the Senator or Senators whom you wish interrogated by the Committee. Name them now, tomorrow, within the next 48 hours. Name them on the floor. Give the names to the Chairman of the Committee. State your charges or allegations against them and the basis for them. Be specific about the mishandling of campaign funds: name the campaigns to the Privileges and Elections Subcommittee.

I say to any Senator here, do you wish the Majority Leader to appear and if so, what are the charges and allegations? State them and I should be delighted to appear before the Committee. I guarantee that the Chairman and Majority Members of the Committee will air specific charges and allegations of that kind in hearings and insofar as I am concerned, they will be aired in public hearings. The Chairman (Mr. Jordan) made clear yesterday on the floor his willingness to hear such specific charges and allegations. And he will do it under the existing resolution and at once.

I say to all Senators here, let us have done with the sly innuendo, the intemperate inference, the thinly-veiled implication, the vague hints in which some have indulged. Senators have already been hurt by this process and may I say that I would strongly urge such members who have been hurt so unfairly to go before the Rules Committee and demand either a put-up or a shut-up. The Chairman, I know, will be willing to accommodate any such member and immediately.

And I wish to say, finally, let us be done with resolutions which infer that Committees are not doing their job before we know what job they have done, resolutions that imply that the Senate and all within it is covered with dirt from rooftop to cellar. They are demeaning. They are an affront to the entire Senate.